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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 003391

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - GUANTANAMO - KORAN
DESECRATION - NEWSWEEK REPORT UZBEKISTAN - INTERNATIONAL
REACTIONS DARFUR - NATO
PARIS - WEDNESDAY, MAY 18, 2005

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

- [1](#). GUANTANAMO - KORAN DESECRATION - NEWSWEEK REPORT
- [2](#). UZBEKISTAN - INTERNATIONAL REACTIONS
- [3](#). DARFUR - NATO

B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

THE REFERENDUM ON THE EU CONSTITUTION CONTINUES TO BE A LEAD STORY. PM RAFFARIN'S TELEVISED APPEAL LAST EVENING IN FAVOR OF THE 'YES' IS FRONT-PAGED IN LE FIGARO WHILE LE MONDE CARRIES THE RESULTS OF THE LATEST POLL WHICH INDICATE THAT THE 'NO' IS ONCE AGAIN IN THE LEAD WITH 53 PERCENT. LIBERATION REPORTS ON SQUABBLES WITHIN FRENCH FAMILIES DIVIDED OVER THE VOTE, USING THE MITTERRAND FAMILY AS AN EXAMPLE. IN OTHER EUROPEAN NEWS, BRUSSELS'S DECISION TO THREATEN CHINA WITH TEXTILE QUOTAS IS WIDELY REPORTED AND THE U.S. IS COMMENDED FOR ITS QUICK RESPONSE. SAYS ENRI EMMANUELLI, A SOCIALIST PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATIVE IN FAVOR OF THE 'NO' VOTE: "LOOK HOW RIDICULOUS WE ARE. THE U.S. AND TURKEY DECIDED TO IMPOSE QUOTAS IN JUST EIGHT DAYS. IN EUROPE OUR LEADERS ARE THINKING AND WRITING ABOUT WHETHER AN INQUIRY IS NECESSARY." IN ITS EDITORIAL LE FIGARO COMMENTS: "AFTER THE U.S. , EUROPE. EVEN IF CHINA IS CALLING THE MEASURES 'TREASON.' IF THERE IS ONE COUNTRY THAT PROFITS FROM GLOBALIZATION IT IS CHINA. THESE SAFEGUARDS ARE INDEED NECESSARY. BUT OTHERS IN OTHER SECTORS ARE JUST AS NEEDED. FURTHERMORE, ONLY A RE-EVALUATION OF THE YUAN CAN HELP. BUT BEIJING IS NOT EAGER TO TRAVEL THAT ROAD. CLEARLY CHINA IS NOT READY TO EVOLVE. AND CERTAINLY NOT UNDER PRESSURE."

TWO MAJOR INTERNATIONAL STORIES ARE WIDELY COVERED: THE CONTROVERSY OVER ALLEGATIONS ABOUT THE DESECRATION OF THE KORAN IN GUANTANAMO AND INTERNATIONAL REACTIONS TO UZBEKISTAN'S DEMONSTRATIONS AND KARAMOV'S SUBSEQUENT REPRISALS. (SEE PART C)

THE SITUATION IN DARFUR AND NATO'S POSSIBLE INVOLVEMENT IS REPORTED IN LE FIGARO (SEE PART C) WHICH ALSO ANSWERS THE QUESTION OF WHETHER EU DEFENSE WOULD BE SUBORDINATE TO NATO, AS PART OF A SERIES ABOUT THE EU CONSTITUTION: ALEXANDRINE BOUILHET'S ANSWER IS 'NO.' "FAR FROM SUBORDINATING EUROPEAN DEFENCE TO NATO OF WHICH IT IS TODAY A COMPONENT, THE CONSTITUTION WOULD PROMOTE A MORE AUTONOMOUS AND AMBITIOUS DEFENCE POLICY WHILE PRESERVING TIES WITH THE U.S."

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

GUANTANAMO - KORAN DESECRATION - NEWSWEEK REPORT

"THE RUMOR FROM GUANTANAMO"

DOMINIQUE QUINIO IN CATHOLIC LA CROIX (05/18): "VERY LITTLE IS NEEDED TO SPARK ANTI-AMERICANISM IN MANY COUNTRIES. DESECRATION OF THE KORAN IS NOT 'LITTLE.' IN MATTERS OF TORTURE, THERE ARE ACTS OF PHYSICAL VIOLENCE, AND ACTS WHICH ARE PSYCHOLOGICALLY DESTRUCTIVE. THEY HURT THOSE WHO ARE SUBMITTED TO THEM, AND DEBASE THOSE WHO COMMIT THEM. DID THE AMERICANS COMMIT SUCH ACTS? THIS IS WHAT NEWSWEEK SAID. THE RUMOR, WHICH WAS ALREADY BEING CIRCULATED AMONG FORMER PRISONERS, HAS SPARKED SERIOUS DEMONSTRATIONS IN AFGHANISTAN. AMERICAN OFFICIALS, CONCERNED ABOUT AMERICA'S IMAGE BEING ONCE AGAIN TARNISHED IN MUSLIM PUBLIC OPINION, DENIED NEWSWEEK'S ALLEGATIONS AND NEWSWEEK HAS RETRACTED. BUT THE HARM IS DONE. ANGER IS SPREADING IN THE MUSLIM WORLD. WE MUST ALSO WONDER ABOUT NEWSWEEK'S EXECUTIVES WHO DID NOT MEASURE THE CONSEQUENCES OF PUBLISHING SUCH STORIES. IN GUANTANAMO, A PLACE WHERE THERE IS NO LAW, THE LACK OF TRANSPARENCY THAT SURROUNDS THE PRISONERS' CONDITIONS OF DETENTION OPENS THE DOOR TO ALL SORTS OF RUMORS AND PROPAGANDA. AND ALLOWS EVERY DOUBT TO EXIST. TRUTH OR LIES? AMERICA'S DEFENSE OF DEMOCRACY WHICH IT WANTS TO PROMOTE EVERYWHERE IS SINGULARLY WEAKENED."

"THE U.S. PRESS ON THE BENCH OF THE ACCUSED"

JEAN-LOUIS TURLIN IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (05/18): "IS THE PEN MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD? TRUE OR FALSE, THE 'INFORMATION' CAME FROM A SINGLE SOURCE, AN ANONYMOUS 'U.S."

OFFICIAL.' DETAILS OF THE CONTROVERSY OVER NEWSWEEK'S REVELATIONS TAKES NOTHING AWAY FROM THE FACT THAT SUCH INCIDENTS COULD HAVE TAKEN PLACE; THE MAGAZINE IS NOT THE FIRST TO HAVE REPORTED CASES OF DESECRATION OF THE KORAN. FURTHERMORE, NEWSWEEK GAVE AN ADVANCE COPY OF ITS ARTICLE TO THE PENTAGON, WHICH DID NOT CRITICIZE THAT PARTICULAR ASPECT OF THE ARTICLE."

"AN S.O.B. ."

PIERRE MARCELLE IN LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION (05/18): "THE PENTAGON'S WAY OF MAKING NEWSWEEK AND THE U.S. PRESS IN GENERAL RESPONSIBLE FOR ITS DISASTROUS HANDLING OF IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN IS MUCH LIKE PATTON'S TANKS. ON MONDAY A PENTAGON OFFICIAL ALLEGEDLY CALLED NEWSWEEK'S INFORMANT `AN S.O.B.' ALL U.S. OFFICIALS, FROM THE PENTAGON TO THE WHITE HOUSE HAVE QUICKLY GIVEN IN TO THE TEMPTATION OF MAKING NEWSWEEK AND THE U.S. PRESS RESPONSIBLE FOR TOO MANY OF THEIR BLUNDERS, FROM ABU GHARAIB TO GUANTANAMO. SEVERAL PREVIOUS REPORTS FROM GAUNTANAMO PRISONERS WHICH TEND TO GIVE CREDIT TO NEWSWEEK'S REPORT DO NOT SEEM TO HAVE TROUBLED THESE OFFICIALS."

UZBEKISTAN - INTERNATIONAL REACTIONS

"OF REBELS AND TYRANTS"

PATRICK SABATIER IN LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION (05/18): "UZBEKISTAN IS FAR AND ITS FATE APPEARS DISCONNECTED FROM EUROPE'S CONCERNS. WRONGLY, BECAUSE IT IS THE MOST POPULATED COUNTRY IN CENTRAL ASIA AND THE KEYSTONE OF A DANGEROUS REGION. RUSSIA, CHINA, INDIA, TURKEY, IRAN, THE ARAB-MUSLIM WORLD, BUT ALSO THE U.S. ARE FIGHTING FOR INFLUENCE IN THE LATEST ROUND OF THE GREAT GAME. KARIMOV IS A TYRANT, BUT HIS ENEMIES, ISLAMIC RADICALS LINKED TO THE TALIBAN AND BIN LADEN'S NETWORK, ARE JUST AS BAD. YET THE TYRANT CAN COUNT ON NON-INTERFERENCE FROM ALL THOSE WHO ARE AT WAR AGAINST ISLAMIC TERRORISM: CHINA, RUSSIA, AND THE U.S. NO ONE WILL HEAR BUSH CALL FOR A DEMOCRATIC CRUSADE IN TASHKENT. HE DOES NOT WANT A REVOLUTION SIMILAR TO THE ONES IN GEORGIA, UKRAINE OR KIRGHIZSTAN. IT IS PROBABLY BECAUSE, LIKE ROOSEVELT WHEN HE SPOKE OF STALIN, BUSH NO DOUBT THINKS KARIMOV IS `AN S.O.B. BUT HE IS OUR S.O.B.' IN THIS GREAT GAME, CYNICISM MAY SEEM LIKE A TRUMP CARD. BUT ONLY UNTIL THE TYRANT FALLS, TOPPLED BY THE REBELS WHO WILL THEN TURN AGAINST THOSE WHO STOOD BY IDLE."

DARFUR - NATO

"NATO READY TO INTERVENE `VERY QUICKLY'"

ALEXANDRINE BOUILHET IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (05/18): "FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE HISTORY OF NATO, THIS INSTITUTION COULD SET FOOT IN BLACK AFRICA. THE REQUEST MADE BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE AFRICAN UNION IS PROOF THAT THE AU HAS FAILED IN DARFUR. NATO'S INVOLVEMENT ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT, WHICH WOULD ONLY INVOLVE LOGISTICAL SUPPORT BUT NO DEPLOYMENT OF WESTERN TROOPS, IS A CONTROVERSIAL TOPIC IN AFRICA. AND IN SPITE OF NATO'S ASSURANCES, NATO'S INTERVENTION IN AFRICA CONTINUES TO UPSET FRENCH AND EUROPEAN SENSITIVITIES. FM BARNIER REITERATED THAT `NATO WAS NOT THE SHERIFF OF THE WORLD' BUT HE HAS BEEN UNABLE TO STOP THE ANGLO-SAXON TSUNAMI IN AFRICA. FRANCE WILL TRY, AS IT DID WITH NATO'S INTERVENTION IN IRAQ, TO REDUCE NATO'S VISIBILITY IN SUDAN WHILE BOOSTING THE ROLE OF THE EU. BUT THIS TIME FRANCE HAS DECIDED NOT TO TURN DARFUR INTO A SOURCE OF CONFLICT WITH WASHINGTON." WOLFF